

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 FEA-01 ERDA-05 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00

COME-00 DODE-00 EB-08 FPC-01 H-01 INR-07 INT-05 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 OMB-01 PM-04 USIA-06 OES-06 SP-02

SS-15 STR-04 TRSE-00 ACDA-07 PA-01 PRS-01 AGRE-00

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R 150925Z MAR 77

FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1632

INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 TEHRAN 2314

EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: BEXP, ENRG, PFOR, EGEN, BG, IR

SUBJ: IRAN-BANGLADESH RELATIONS: VISIT TO TEHRAN OF CHIEF MARSHAL

LAW ADMINISTRATOR MAJOR GENERAL ZIAUR RAHMAN, MARCH 7-10, 1977

REF: DACCA 1289

BEGIN SUMMARY: BANGLADESH CHIEF MARSHAL LAW ADMINSTRATOR MAJOR GENERAL

ZIAUR RAHMAN HAD, FROM ALL REPORTS REACHING THE EMBASSY, A SUCCESSFUL

FOUR-DAY STATE VISIT TO IRAN. ECONOMIC/TECHNICAL

COOPERATION AND CULTURAL

AGREEMENTS WERE SIGNED AND THE FIRST MEETING

OF THE BANGLADESH-IRAN JOINT

COMMISSION TOOK PLACE DURING GENERAL ZIA'S STAY.

BANGLADESH'S WILLINGNESS AND

CAPACITY TO MEET SOME OF IRAN'S MANPOWER NEEDS FIEGURED PROMINENTLY IN

THE DISCUSSIONS. IRAN AGREED, IN PRINCIPLE,

TO INCREASE ITS IMPORTS OF

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BANGLADESH PRODUCTS. THE SHAH REPORTEDLY AGREED, IN PRINCIPLE, TO A

LARGER ALLOCATION FOR BANGLADESH FROM THE OPEC SPECIAL FUND. NATIONAL

IRANIAN OIL COMPANY REPORTEDLY AGREED TO CONTINUE THE ANNUAL SUPPLY OF

400,000 TONS OF CRUDE OVER THE NEXT SEVERAL YEARS WITH A PROVISION FOR

AN INCREASE DEPENDING UPON BANGLADESH REQUIREMENTS. GENERAL ZIA MADE A DETAILED PRESENTATION OF THE BANGLADESH POSITION ON THE "FARAKKA ISSUE AND REPEATED BORDER INFRINGEMENTS" AND IS SATISFIED THAT THE SHAH NOW KNOWS HIS COUNTRY'S VIEWS ON THESE DISPUTES WITH INDIA. END SUMMARY

1. BANGLADESH CHIEF MARSHAL LAW ADMINISTRATOR MAJOR GENERAL ZIAUR RAHMAN COMPLETED WHAT APPEARS TO BE A SUCCESSFUL FOUR-DAY STATE VISIT TO IRAN. ECONOMIC RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES WERE THE CENTERPIECE OF THE VISIT. THE VISIT RECEIVED PROMINENT PRESS COVERAGE IN TEHRAN AND WAS HIGHLIGHTED BY THE ISSUANCE OF THE USUAL JOINT COMMUNIQUE, AND AGREEMENT ON ECONOMIC AND TECHNICAL COOPERATION BETWEEN THE TWO NATIONS AND A CULTURAL AGREEMENT. GENERAL ZIA HAD A 90-MINUTE AUDIENCE WITH THE SHAH AND MET PRIVATELY AS WELL WITH PRIME MINISTER HOVEYDA, NATIONAL IRANIAN OIL COMPANY (NIOC) HEAD EGHBAL, FOREIGN MINISTER KHALATBARI, COMMERCE MINISTER TASLIMI AND OTHER CABINET OFFICIALS. ACCORDING TO BANGLADESH AMBASSADOR HERE, GENERAL ZIA WAS ALTOGETHER PLEASED WITH HIS VISIT AND EVIDENTLY BELIEVES THAT MATTERS OF CONSIDERABLE SUBSTANTIVE IMPORTANCE TO BANGLADESH WERE DISCUSSED AND, IN SOME CASES, REAL PROGRESS RECORDED.

2. THE ECONOMIC AND TECHNICAL COOPERATION AGREEMENT CALLS FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A JOINT COMMISSION TO FACILITATE ECONOMIC AND TECHNICAL COOPERATION IN SUCH AREAS AS NATURAL RESOURCES, AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES, MANPOWER, AND IN SUCH OTHER AREAS AS MAY BE AGREED UPON. THE FIRST MEETING OF THE IRAN-BANGLADESH JOINT COMMISSION OCCURRED DURING THE GENERAL'S CONFIDENTIAL

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VISIT, CHAIRED JOINTLY BY GOI MINISTER OF COMMERCE TASLIMI AND DR. M.N. HUDA, PLANNING MINISTER OF THE GOB. THE NEXT MEETING OF THE COMMISSION WILL TAKE PLACE IN DACCA AT AN UNSPECIFIED DATE IN THE FUTURE.

3. GENERAL ZIA'S VISIT PROVIDED THE OCCASION FOR BANGLADESH TO EMPHASIZE TO THE IRANIANS ITS KEEN DESIRE IN HELPING TO MEET IRAN'S MANPOWER NEEDS. ACCORDING TO BANGLADESH AMBASSADOR, THERE ARE SOME 700 BANGLADESH CITIZENS IN IRAN UNDER OFFICIAL AUSPICES OF ONE KIND OR ANOTHER (THE UNOFFICIAL FIGURE IS DOUBTLESS MUCH HIGHER). A SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER OF THESE APPARENTLY ARE SKILLED PERSONNEL IN SUCH CATEGORIES AS DOCTORS (SOME 65), NURSES, TRUCK DRIVERS, MIDDLE-LEVEL AGRICULTURAL TECHNICIANS, AND JUTE FACTORY TECHNICIANS; THERE ARE ALSO A LARGE NUMBER OF SEMI-SKILLED WORKERS AND UNSKILLED DOMESTICS. OVER THE PAST YEAR, THE OFFICIALLY REGISTERED BANGLADESH CITIZENS HAVE REMITTED BACK TO BANGLADESH SOME 2 AND A HALF MILLION DOLLARS. EVIDENTLY, THE BANGLADESH OFFICIALS WHO ACCOMPANIED GENERAL ZIA TOLD THEIR IRANIAN HOSTS

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 TEHRAN 2314

THAT BANGLADESH COULD OVER TIME PROVIDE ABOUT 10 PERCENT OF
IRAN'S 700,00 MAN LABOR DEFICIT. A MANPOWER PROTOCOL
BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES WAS SIGNED IN SEPTEMBER 1976
AND THE GOB EVIDENTLY EXPECTS THE NUMBER OF ITS CITIZENS
WORKING IN IRAN TO GROW SUBSTANTIALY OVER THE NEXT FEW YEARS.

4. WELL AWARE OF IRAN'S CURRENT CASH FLOW STRINGENCIES AND
DISINCLINATION AT THIS TIME TO INCREASE ITS BILATERAL AID
(AS OPPOSED TO INCREASED ALLOCATIONS FROM THE OPEC SPECIAL
FUND) TO THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES, GENERAL ZIA REPORTEDLY DID
NOT ASK FOR ADDITIONAL BILATERAL CASH ASSISTANCE. RATHER,
THE BANGLADESH DELEGATION WAS QUITE SATISFIED IN RECEIVING
WHAT THE AMBASSADOR HERE DESCRIBED AS DE FACTO MFN TREATMENT,
OR "FIRST REFUSALS," ON THE SUPPLY TO IRAN AT INTERNATIONAL
PRICES OF A NUMBER OF BANGLADESH COMMODITIES--E.G., NEWS-
PRINT, LEATHER PRODUCTS, RAW JUTE, HANDICRAFTS, AND SOME
AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS (POTATOES, PINEAPPLES, ONIONS AND
SPICES). THIRTY-FIVE COMMODITIES AVAILABLE FOR EXPORT FROM
BANGLADESH TO IRAN AND 73 COMMODITIES FROM IRAN TO BANGLADESH
ARE INCLUDED IN ANNEXES TO JULY 1976 TRADE AGREEMENTS BETWEEN
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THE TWO COUNTRIES. ADDITIONALLY, GENERAL ZIA AND HIS PARTY INFORMED THE IRANIANS THAT BANGLADESH WOULD WELCOME IRANIAN INVESTMENT, PARTICULARLY IN AGRICULTURAL AND FERTILIZER JOINT VENTURES. FINALLY, THE SHAH REPORTEDLY AGREED TO AN INCREASE IN BANGLADESH'S ALLOCATION FROM THE OPEC SPECIAL FUND AT \$21 MILLION NOW (\$14 MILLION BALANCE OF PAYMENTS; \$7 MILLION IN INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS). THE BANGLADESH AMBASSADOR OPINED THAT THE FIGURE MIGHT REACH \$100 MILLION IN THE NEXT YEAR OR SO.

5. IRAN IS CURRENTLY SUPPLYING BANGLADESH WITH 400,000 TONS OF PETROLEUM ANNUALLY FOR SHELL'S CHITTAGONG REFINERY. WE HAD UNDERSTOOD THAT THIS PETROLEUM WAS SUPPLIED OVER LONG-TERM CREDIT SIMILAR TO THAT RECEIVED BY INDIA BUT THE BANGLADESH AMBASSADOR SAYS THAT 90-DAYS CREDIT IS ALL THAT HIS COUNTRY RECEIVES FROM NIOC (IN 1974, THE YEAR DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS BETWEEN IRAN AND BANGLADESH WERE OPENED, THIS CREDIT WAS FOR 180 DAYS BUT HAS NOW BEEN HALVED). NIOC HAS REPORTEDLY AGREED TO GUARANTEE THIS 400,000 TON SUPPLY ANNUALLY OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS WITH A PROVISION FOR INCREASING THE FIGURE TO 700,000 TONS IN THE NEXT 5-10 YEAR PERIOD, DEPENDING UPON BANGLADESH REQUIREMENTS. NIOC WILL ALSO, WITHIN THE NEXT MONTH OR TWO, SEND EXPLORATION TEAMS TO BANGLADESH TO ASSIST IN THE COUNTRY'S EFFORTS TO DEVELOP BOTH ITS NATURAL GAS AND OFF-SHORE PETROLEUM RESERVES.

6. QUERIED ON THE IRANIAN RESPONSE TO GENERAL ZIA'S PRESENTATION OF THE "FARAKKA ISSUE AND REPEATED BORDER INFRINGEMENTS" (TO QUOTE FROM THE JOINT COMMUNIQUE), THE BANGLADESH AMBASSADOR SAYS ZIA GOT FROM THE SHAH ALL THAT HE COULD REASONABLE HAVE HOPED FOR. APPARENTLY, ZIA WENT OVER THE BANGLADESH POSITION ON THESE TWO ISSUES, WITH MAP IN HAND, AND IS SATISFIED THAT THE SHAH NOW KNOWS (1) THE BANGLADESH POSITION ON THE TWO ISSUES; (2) THAT AN URGENT SOLUTION IS REQUIRED; AND (3) THAT IT IS PRPER FOR BANGLADESH TO PURSUE BOTH ISSUES IN MULTILATERAL FORA AS WELL. ZIA WAS CANDID IN TELLING THE

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SHAH THAT BANGLADESH CLEARLY RECOGNIZES THE SINE QUA NON OF GETTING ALONG WITH INDIA, BUT WENT ON TO SAY THAT BOTH ISSUES ARE "ONLY A 5 PERCENT PROBLEM FOR INDIA BUT A 95 PERCENT PROBLEM FOR US." THE BANGLADESH AMBASSADOR THOUGHT IT SIGNIFICANT THAT THE IRANIANS AGREED NOT RPT NOT TO REGARD FARAKKA AND THE BORDER INFRINGEMENTS AS PURELY BILATERAL MATTERS BETWEEN BANGLADESH AND INDIA. THE WORD "BILATERAL" IS NOT USED IN MENTION OF THE TWO ISSUES IN THE JOINT COMMUNIQUE.

7. IN THE AREA OF TRANSPORTATION, IRAN AIR'S MANAGING DIRECTOR

KHADEMI AGREED BOTH TO IRAN AIR FLIGHTS TO DACCA AND BANGLADESH
AIRLINE FLIGHTS TO IRAN ON A RECIPROCAL BASIS AS SOON AS
POSSIBLE. EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY, IRAN'S ARYA SHIPPING LINES
WILL OPEN SERVICE TO BANGLADESH WITH A ONCE-A-MONTH CALL
AT CHITTAGONG.

8. WE ARE POUCHING COPIES OF THE DOCUMENTS SIGNED DURING THE
VISIT.
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Message Attributes

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Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
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